



MICHIGAN

For Immediate Release

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Michigan Small Business Supports Changes to Merit Curriculum

Lansing (April 10, 2013) – A majority of small business owners surveyed by the **National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)** support changing the Michigan Merit Curriculum to recognize that not all high school graduates are destined for college.

“Small business owners believe that the current Merit Curriculum standards are more focused on college preparation at the expense of other career paths such as skilled trades,” said **NFIB State Director Charlie Owens**. “Some of the requirements, such as Algebra II, seem to be more about appearances in the academic community and less about practical and useful life skills.”

In 2006, high school graduation requirements in Michigan were changed in an effort to better prepare students for college and the workplace. The changes, referred to as “The Michigan Merit Curriculum” attempt to define a common set of required credits for high school graduation.

However, according to Owens, supporters of changing the current Michigan Merit Curriculum say that it was designed by members of the “education bureaucracy” who assume everyone should go to college regardless of desire or aptitude for other career paths. HB 4465 (Rep. McBroom) and HB 4466 (Rep. Johnson) have been introduced to modify the Merit Curriculum to address some of these concerns, but it has met stiff resistance from the State Board of Education and others.

When asked if changes should be made to the Michigan Merit Curriculum, 76 percent of those surveyed said YES, 19 percent said NO and 5 percent were undecided.

“As many as 36 percent of our members have told us in our recent monthly optimism survey that they can’t find qualified labor, which is a terrible irony in a bad economy with such a large pool of unemployed workers,” said Owens. “We shouldn’t be discouraging people from learning trades that offer good jobs and students should be allowed to substitute vocational training and skilled-trades courses for some of the unnecessary college preparatory requirements in the current curriculum.”

Owens said that NFIB will be supporting the proposed changes in the legislation and working to secure its passage in the legislature.

To view the survey question go to <http://bit.ly/X995pC>

To view the recent Monthly Optimism Survey go to <http://bit.ly/Ubv1QW>

For more information about NFIB, please visit www.nfib.com/michigan.

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